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SUBJECT: "SHAPING FOR SUCCESS": NANGARHAR, KUNAR, LAGHMAN  
PROVINCES DEVELOPMENT SURVEY

11. (SBU) Summary and comment: Regional Command East (RC-E) recently released the results of its October 2009 development survey representing the views of nearly 2,400 residents of the Command's critical focus provinces of Nangarhar, Kunar and Laghman ("NKL"). The survey's results can be interpreted in two critical ways: ongoing counter-insurgency (COIN) operations have begun to set conditions in these provinces for more long-term development, but the results nonetheless reflect three decades of war. Afghans in these eastern provinces want clean water, level roads and electricity, but do not want to pay for them. As GIROA expands development in rural areas and begins to provide essential services, it will face continued public expectation that the costs for these projects and services should be borne by the government or outside agencies not the residents of the provinces.  
End summary and comment.

DESIRED OUTCOME: TO DISCOVER "BEST PRACTICES"  
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12. (SBU) Regional Command East recently released the results of its latest development survey of the local population in the provinces of Nangarhar, Kunar and Laghman. The purpose of this quarterly survey was to examine local perceptions and attitudes toward development efforts in these provinces, including such issues as satisfaction with essential services, the media and attitudes towards GIROA and Afghan security forces. Nearly 2,400 Afghans were surveyed door-to-door in randomly selected villages October 13-19, 2009, by the Afghan Center for Socio-Economic and Opinion Research, the firm used by major international media outlets and the Asia Foundation. Roughly an equal number of men and women were surveyed across all age and ethnic/tribal groups. This particular effort attempted to investigate the deeper issues of not just satisfaction but how people believe developmental efforts are best managed and delivered. One desired outcome of this survey was to offer "best practices" that could be applied to local, small-scale development projects at the district level.

THINGS MAY NOT BE GOOD, BUT THEY ARE IMPROVING  
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13. (SBU) Essential Services: Nearly 50 percent of respondents say that basic services improved over the last year. When asked about life in general, the dominant response in Laghman is that it is better; the population of Nangarhar says it is roughly the same; and 40 percent of the people of Kunar complain it has become worse. Twice as many people have seen the roads improve in their area as have seen improvements in the economy (58 percent and 26 percent, respectively).

14. (SBU) When asked who is responsible for these changes, 40-50 percent say that either the district or the provincial government is responsible, with another 20-30 percent saying the Afghan police, army or Coalition Forces are responsible for bringing better services to their area. When asked who is responsible for declines in services, 40-50 percent blame the Taliban, Al Qaeda or insurgents. This is a recurring pattern in this and previous polls where the

authorities, civil or uniformed, are generally given credit for positive developments while anti-government elements are perceived as culpable for declines of services.

¶5. (SBU) When asked about the one action GIROA could take to improve the economic situation, resident responses include a somewhat balanced mix of better security, more jobs and the availability of electricity. A quarter of the people say they do not have access to safe and reliable drinking water. In Laghman, those drawing their water from wells are twice as likely to say this situation is not acceptable. In Kunar and Nangarhar, those drawing from a river or stream are three times as likely to assert they do not have acceptable access. Water and irrigation improvement are services that respondents indicate would be best managed by local leaders.

#### SENSE THAT AFGHAN SECURITY FORCES CAN PROVIDE SECURITY

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¶6. (SBU) Security: More than half of Kunar respondents say they do not feel safe going about their day-to-day activities, while two-thirds of respondents in Nangarhar and Laghman say they do. The data indicate that people think Afghan security forces can provide security and have better capacity to do so than local leaders or Coalition Forces. Comment: security perceptions reflect localized sentiment because Coalition Forces do not have a continuous presence in many areas. End comment.

¶7. (SBU) Respondents were asked if road safety prevents them from traveling. About 20 percent of respondents say that poor security prevented them from attending a wedding or family gathering, for example. Kunar citizens registered the most concerns -- 29 percent

KABUL 00004186 002 OF 002

-- and Nangarhar the lowest -- 16 percent. Some 14 percent referred to police checkpoints as a hindrance to travel, highlighting an apparent paradox: while perceived as enhancing security on the one hand, police are also viewed as a constraint to freedom of movement.

#### CONTINUING CENTRAL ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

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¶8. (SBU) Community Management of Development Efforts: New to this survey were questions about who can best manage community development. In all districts, a slight majority preferred outside help with drinking water. Over 61 percent prefer local community management of irrigation resources. This sentiment is reversed when considering roads and electricity, as most communities recognize these projects to be beyond their means.

¶9. (SBU) Value of Service: How much are Afghans willing to pay for water, power and road improvements? Residents of the provinces surveyed do not generally pay for water or roads. Asking them to pay for something they currently have (or gather) for free will likely conflict with a widely held sense of entitlement. Although 80 percent of respondents say they do not pay for housing, those who do pay an average of only \$17 USD monthly. Reliable cell phone coverage has roughly the same value, approximately \$18 USD per month as a typical rent payment. Most would only pay about \$1.50 USD for water, if anything, because at the village level water is typically fetched by women at no cost. Respondents are willing to pay more for paved roads to their home than any other additional service, about \$23 USD.

¶10. (SBU) Comment: The survey's results can be interpreted in two critical ways: 1) ongoing counter-insurgency (COIN) operations have begun to set the conditions in these provinces for more long-term development; and 2) the results nonetheless reflect the difficult conditions residents face after three decades of war. The survey also suggests that the general population of the critical NKL provinces in eastern Afghanistan relies increasingly on outside actors, including the GIROA, for a range of essential services including security. Residents, however, generally do not want to pay for essential services, which portends challenges when and if the authorities attempt to move from what is essentially a

subsistence economy to a more mixed economy. U.S. civilians in RC-E and elsewhere in the field will need to continue fostering local buy-in to governance and development efforts to strengthen prospects for long-term sustainability. End comment.

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